The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2016/482)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa; and His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Allam-Mi, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/482, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Bathily.

Mr. Bathily (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2016/482). The report before the Council identifies the principal threats to peace and security in Central Africa and an update on the initiatives of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) over the past six months, in consultation with the States of the subregion, entities of the United Nations system and subregional organizations.

(*spoke in English*)

The successful holding of presidential and legislative elections in the Central African Republic has brought the transition to an end. I am pleased that the country has reached that important milestone, putting the Central African Republic back on the path towards sustainable peace, development and long-term peacebuilding. I commend the Governments, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and other United Nations entities, as well as partners that have worked tirelessly to end the crisis in the Central African Republic. President Faustin Archange Touadera enjoys widespread support, and the population wants and needs change for the better.

At the same time, the challenges before the Central African Republic remain immense, in the context of ongoing, serious protection and humanitarian needs, crushing poverty and urgent requirements in the areas of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, as well as on security-sector reform. Armed groups still control large parts of the country, and the Government is in need of the full political, programmatic and financial support of the international community to ensure the re-establishment of State authority throughout the country.

Despite recent positive developments, it is critical that partners remain engaged and redouble their assistance to the country across all the thematic areas of need, in order to take advantage of the window of opportunity that is before us. I commend the Governments of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) for their invaluable support to the Central African Republic to date. I encourage them to continue to support the Central African Republic in its post-transition efforts.

As I already stated during my previous briefing (see S/PV.7572), in December 2015, there are political tensions of concern in other countries in Central Africa that are linked to recent or upcoming electoral processes. That undermines the ongoing work to consolidate stability, development and democracy in countries of the subregion, and also the necessary work of integration across the area. I will continue to use my good offices to engage with stakeholders in the subregion to encourage the peaceful resolution of those disputes. I also believe that it is crucial to redouble our conflict-prevention efforts in countries where elections are still due to take place this year, including through the promotion of an inclusive political dialogue.

I am pleased to report that, since my previous briefing to the Council, the collective efforts of the Lake Chad Basin countries have reduced the capacity of Boko Haram to undertake frequent attacks, as it had in the past. The cross-border operations by the Multi-National Joint Task Force have captured Boko Haram fighters,

freed captives and reclaimed territory from the terrorist group. However, the ability to conduct precise counter-insurgency operations is often compromised due to an assessment by security forces that Boko Haram operatives live among the local population. Despite the successes realized, Boko Haram continues to pose a serious threat to regional stability. The group persists in targeting civilians, including through suicide attacks, often using young girls as bombers. Additionally, the risk that Boko Haram could attract or catalyse other terrorist threats in the subregion should not be discounted. While humanitarian assistance has been mobilized for the populations affected by Boko Haram, the number of internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing from Boko Haram violence continues to increase, with limited funding received thus far to address the growing humanitarian needs.

For those reasons, it is crucial that international partners maintain their support to the region in order to end the threat posed by the group and that they stress the need for a holistic regional approach, as emphasized during the second Regional Security Summit, held in Abuja on 14 May. I urge the international community to support the Multi-National Joint Task Force by mobilizing the requisite political, logistical and financial support in a flexible manner.

While assistance to the Multi-National Joint Task Force is critical, however, so is the need to finance and implement early-recovery and development activities in the affected areas. In that regard, I will continue to work in close cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel to engage the Governments concerned and the relevant subregional bodies — the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of West African States — to ensure their continued support for the Task Force and the allocation of adequate humanitarian and development assistance to the affected populations. We will also continue to encourage them to ensure that counter-terrorism operations are carried out in full compliance with international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. The support and assistance of the international community to reduce the burden on the affected States will be crucial to winning the fight against Boko Haram.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to threaten the security of the population in the area where it operates, and notably increased its alleged attacks in the Central African Republic during the reporting period, reportedly extending into areas that had previously seen little to no LRA movement. Group elements have also persisted in attacking the civilian population in the north-eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Overall, the LRA now appears to be deviating from what for a certain period had been a low-profile posture, with attacks against larger and less isolated population areas being noted and an increased number of children kidnapped and kept. We must keep that in mind and continue our efforts until the job is finally completed.

During the reporting period, UNOCA continued its active engagement to fill coordination gaps on the LRA issue and convened the biannual meeting of LRA focal points in April. Together with the African Union and other United Nations partners, UNOCA also organized a workshop in March to identify more clearly the respective roles and responsibilities of different actors in LRA-affected countries that are assisting LRA members who have defected or escaped from the group. UNOCA also assisted in the organization of a meeting of the African Union's Joint Coordination Mechanism in May, which called for the mobilization of additional resources for the Regional Task Force — a particularly important issue given the decision of Uganda to withdraw from the force in the near future. The United Nations is concerned about the impact of Uganda's potential withdrawal on the security situation in the eastern part of the Central African Republic and calls on all stakeholders, including the Governments of Uganda and of the Central African Republic, as well as partners, to ensure that any potential departure of Ugandan troops is undertaken in an orderly and coordinated manner.

I am pleased to report that progress has been made in the operationalization of the regional strategy on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, which includes the adoption of a number of recommendations with regard to the programme of activities, the budget and the administration of the Interregional Coordination Centre, which is based in Yaoundé. I also welcome the scheduling of the African Union summit on maritime security and development in Lomé in October 2016.

In all aspects of UNOCA's work, our principal partner remains the Economic Community of Central African States. During the reporting period we focused on the further strengthening of the relationship between the two institutions. That has included coordination with the Secretary-General of ECCAS on the provision of

UNOCA support for the reform of ECCAS institutions and the conclusion of a new cooperation framework agreement to guide our joint efforts. In that context, I welcome the briefing of Secretary-General Ahmad Allam-Mi to the Council today.

We look forward to the continued engagement of the Security Council in promoting peace and security in Central Africa. UNOCA will continue to work closely with Member States of the subregion in that important endeavour.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Bathily for his briefing and his exemplary commitment.

I now give the floor to Mr. Allam-Mi.

Mr. Allam-Mi (*spoke in French*): I would like to say how honoured I am and pleased to be here among the members of the Security Council at this important informational meeting on the Central African region. I express my sincere thanks to the French presidency for its invitation addressed to me to succinctly brief the Council on the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which is, it must be emphasized, one of eight pillars for the building of African integration.

Established in 1983, ECCAS covers a geographical area of 6.6 million square kilometres where more than 160 million people live today. It aims to promote and strengthen harmonious cooperation among its member States, as well as balanced and sustainable development in all areas of socioeconomic activity. To that end, we have just launched, on 13 May in Kinshasa, the ECCAS Free Trade Area. Together with the infrastructure and the environment, free trade is one of our main priorities. Our highest priorities today, however, are peace and security issues, which was not the case when ECCAS was established.

Issues of peace and security were imposed on ECCAS at the end of a period of lethargy for the institution between 1992 and 1998, as a result of the violent wars that 7 of its 10 member States experienced during the period. The ECCAS peace and security architecture works in harmony with the African Union Peace and Security Architecture, with results that can certainly be improved upon but are still encouraging. ECCAS has been able to take concrete action on the ground. For example, the situation in the Central African Republic led ECCAS to deploy its first peacekeeping mission, the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic, which started with a staff of 675 but grew to a staff of 2,600 for its second mission, in 2013, at the peak of the crisis, thereby avoiding chaos in the country.

Accordingly, the member States of ECCAS have agreed, for over two decades, to make significant sacrifices in terms of human, material and financial resources. They have continued to support the Central African Republic, despite the deployment of Operation Sangaris, the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, and then United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Just recently, the financial contribution of ECCAS — decided in November 2015 at the seventh extraordinary summit of Heads of State of the region held to consider the situation in the Central African Republic — was instrumental in the holding of elections and in helping the country complete the transition in a timely manner. Although the transition is over, today ECCAS remains seized of the situation in the Central African Republic and wishes to be associated with any international initiative, whether it be by the United Nations or some other entity, that strives to help that member State to finally get out of the spiral of violence.

With regard to maritime safety and security, ECCAS was the first regional economic community in Africa to adopt a strategy to secure its maritime space, pursuant to resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012). The Central African subregion is now home, in Yaoundé, to the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea (ICC), the body responsible for the implementation of this strategy in the States of the Gulf of Guinea, which, through their regional institutions — ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea (CGG) — are now finalizing the operationalization process. ECCAS, ECOWAS and the CGG have committed to fully supporting the budget for the ICC from July to December 2016. For the year 2017, I would like to appeal to all that are using Gulf of Guinea sea routes and resources — States, institutions, maritime operators, fishing companies, oil companies, ship owners —to announce their contributions at the conference for partners and third-party contributors that we will hold in Yaoundé on 26 to 27 July.

With respect to the fight against terrorism, ECCAS has taken important initiatives to support its two member States — Cameroon and Chad — involved

in the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram. Financial assistance to both countries in the amount of $100 million was granted at a summit on the issue. The fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram is heavy burden on the meagre resources of States engaged in it. It is therefore essential that the international community substantially strengthen its multifaceted support to enable the Multinational Joint Task Force to become fully operational in order to achieve its goal of eliminating Boko Haram.

As to the political, security and humanitarian situation in general, ECCAS remains particularly affected by electoral and post-electoral conflicts, the crises in Burundi and in eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the legacy of the great social, political and humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic and the terrorist activities of Boko Haram, the Lord's Resistance Army and terrorist groups in Libya. In that regard, I commend the excellent report (S/2016/482)of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa, submitted by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abdoulaye Bathily. Nevertheless, certain political aspects of the report could be more nuanced, as the countries of Central Africa are in a transitional phase towards building States based on the rule of law and democracy. In this phase, the international community's support should not fail them, with a view to improving and building the capacity of their institutions.

Despite our efforts and successes, real difficulties, mainly of a structural, financial and technical order, impede the proper functioning of ECCAS. To remedy the situation, we are actively working to bring about institutional reform at ECCAS by updating our constitutive documents — our Treaty dates back to 1983 — in harmony with those of the African Union, renewable funding instruments, an organizational model, efficient decision-making and management procedures consistent with international standards, and policies, strategies and programmes compatible with Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

In this context, support and renewed support on the part of the international community are needed, in particular by the United Nations. The outstanding cooperation between the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the General Secretariat of ECCAS represents a solid foundation for further strengthening and diversifying the partnership with the United Nations system as a whole.

To conclude, allow me to underscore the central role that the regional economic communities play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding and in strengthening security and governance in Africa. ECCAS is playing a leading role in this context and will continue to do so. Our ultimate wish is that United Nations and all bilateral and multilateral partners will continue to trust ECCAS, support it and enhance its cooperation with it in its various activities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Allam-Mi for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.